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Identical letters dated 19 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to call to your attention the ongoing misconduct of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The State of Israel remains concerned regarding the Agency's persistent use of humanitarian funding for the purpose of perpetuating a one-sided narrative about the conflict in our region.

Last month, to promote its fundraising campaign, UNRWA brazenly repurposed a 2014 image of a girl standing among the rubble of a recently bombed building in Qabr Essit, Syria, claiming that she was a young Palestinian from Gaza named Aya. After its fraudulent act was exposed, UNRWA removed the picture from its website but, adding insult to injury, refused to offer a real apology, instead blaming the post on a technical error.

This incident is just the latest symptom of the Agency's negligence and inability to remain neutral, which is consistently plaguing its conduct. The Agency has become notorious for its employees' often egregious acts, including bias and incitement against Israel in UNRWA classrooms and calls for violence on social media.

UNRWA personnel have even been found within the ranks of terrorist organizations. In February 2016, Israeli authorities revealed that the Chairman of the UNRWA Staff Union in the Gaza Strip and Principal of the UNRWA boys' elementary school for refugee children, Suhail al-Hindi, had been elected to the political bureau of Hamas, an internationally designated terror organization. Just last week, we learned that this same Hamas had dug terror tunnels under two UNRWA schools similar to that under al-Hindi's supervision.

Alarmingly, al-Hindi's affiliation with Hamas was not an isolated incident, but part of an established and ongoing trend. Muhammad al-Jamasi, presented in Palestinian media as head of the UNRWA engineering department, was also reportedly elected to the Hamas political bureau.

Only after being faced with incontrovertible evidence of his terrorist connection did UNRWA suspend al-Hindi, providing no further information on the circumstances of his termination. The UNRWA Commissioner-General confirmed al-Hindi's dismissal only when my delegation questioned him publicly about the incident. Even then, the UNRWA representative failed to mention al-Hindi's

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involvement in a terrorist organization. UNRWA still has neither taken responsibility for its misconduct regarding al-Hindi nor provided any details about the Muhammad al-Jamasi case.

On 12 June 2017, the UNRWA Commissioner-General issued a statement assessing the situation in the Gaza Strip that omitted any mention of Hamas' decade-long control of the area and its detrimental impact on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Regrettably, the Commissioner-General has also failed to condemn Hamas' active obstruction of the work of humanitarian agencies on the ground, as well as its abuse of United Nations facilities and diversion of humanitarian aid for military purposes.

UNRWA is an organization with the power, not to mention the responsibility, to speak out against terror and educate the next generation of Palestinians towards peace and reconciliation. My delegation should not be held accountable for reminding UNRWA of its obligation to condemn the exploitation of United Nations agencies and humanitarian aid by terrorists. The Agency's silence in the face of these abuses is deafening.

It is high time that UNRWA stopped promoting a particular narrative and assumed responsibility for any misconduct by its staff and affiliates. It must fulfil its duty to provide a neutral and honest account that represents the real situation on the ground, rather than presenting facts in manners that serve the promotion of a subjective political narrative.

UNRWA, just as all United Nations agencies and bodies, must be held to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and neutrality.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative